

## *The Goodman Family: A Lasting Legacy*

Themes:

- Education
- Immigration
- Community development
- Post-Civil War era
- Women's roles
- Early Gig Harbor

With a case of post-Civil War wanderlust sending them around the West, Joseph Goodman, his wife, Rose, and their children finally settled in Gig Harbor in 1883. Joseph and Rose both came from Bohemia (in the modern-day Czech Republic), but they met and married in Iowa in 1867. They arrived in Gig Harbor on the steamer *Zephyr* and moved into the small cabin Samuel Jerisich had built on the sandspit when he had first arrived. Joseph added a door and three windows and lined the walls with newspaper. Samuel and his wife Anna often stopped by with fish and Rose and Anna became friends. Rose taught Anna to sew, and the story goes that sometimes Anna would help Rose put her baby on a papoose board on her back, just like Anna. Eight children crowded the house, the family having lost four in the years before moving to Washington.

After a year on the sandspit the family moved to the end of the bay, having paid the federal government \$200 for 160 acres in Crescent Valley. Getting supplies or selling their eggs and butter required a row to and from Tacoma and carrying them a mile and a half through the woods. The Goodmans helped build up the new town with Joseph serving as Justice of the Peace for ten years, a trustee of the school board, and as one of the first leaders of the Custer Post of the Grand Army of the Republic, a group for Civil War Union veterans. Rose died in 1912 and Joseph in 1931.

The children in growing Gig Harbor were either educated at home or made the long walk to Artondale to go to school. By 1886, Joseph Goodman, who had been teaching his children and

some of the Jerisiches, decided it was time for a school. He consulted the authorities in Tacoma to establish a school district, the town repurposed an empty Native shanty on the bay, (now on the Burnham claim), nailed painted cardboard to a wall for a blackboard, and Anna Goodman, age seventeen, became the school's first teacher at \$30 a month. Five of the ten students were Jeresich kids and three of the others were Anna's siblings. The students sat on rough benches and worked with slates on their knees. A clay and stick fireplace (that occasionally caught fire) kept them warm and logs headed for the harbor slid by on the skid road outside, occasionally jarring the schoolhouse. The school ran out of money to keep it open after four months and Anna enrolled in Tacoma High School, becoming one of its first three graduates in 1887.<sup>1</sup>

Later in 1887, the town built a new schoolhouse on land leased from Dr. Burnham. Its first teacher was Lennie Patrick, soon replaced by Lucy Goodman, Anna's younger sister. She had attended the University of Washington and the Ellensburg Normal School<sup>2</sup> and taught in schools around the area. At one point in Gig Harbor she had sixty-eight students spanning five grades, two at a desk, in one room. She started at the Crescent Valley School in 1915, where she taught grades one through four on the first floor, the second floor being for grades five through eight.

Lucy was a member of the Gig Harbor Fortnightly Club, a women's social, educational, and philanthropic club that founded a library for the community in 1908. In 1946 Lucy became one of the first librarians of the first library in Gig Harbor as part of the new library district. As a pillar of the community, Miss Goodman was well-known for her annual children's Halloween party, as well as the 1932 Chevrolet coupe she drove straight down the middle of the street on her way to school. (Everyone knew to get out of her way).

Lucy tried to retire in 1927, but family friend Hubert Secor, who ran the town's bus service, urged her to open a private kindergarten<sup>3</sup>. A wood burning stove heated her little school where she taught "reading, writing, and numbers" and played a pump organ for music. By the time she actually retired at age 93, honored and beloved, Lucy had taught school for seventy-six years. She died in 1964 at age 95, mourned by generations of students whose own children and

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<sup>1</sup> In 1922 Anna started her more than twenty-year career as Gig Harbor's telephone operator and her daughter Verna became a teacher herself.

<sup>2</sup> A "normal" school meant a school for training teachers.

<sup>3</sup> Kindergarten was not a standard part of public school at this time.

grandchildren may have been her students. In 1959 the Peninsula School District named Goodman Intermediate School in her honor.

If you visit the Harbor History Museum, you will see on display Joseph Goodman's journal and Civil War Union items as well as Lucy Goodman's organ, her key to the library, children's sewing cards she saved, and a report card she signed. These artifacts help tell the story of a woman and a family foundational to the growth of formal education in Gig Harbor.

Discussion Questions: *(Questions based on Washington social studies standards and the [C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards](#))*

- What choices did the Goodmans have to make over their lives? What are some of the pros and cons or costs and benefits of their choices?
- How did changes in transportation over time affect life in Gig Harbor?
- How has education in Gig Harbor changed over time? How does one change lead to another?
- What are some of the factors and context that may have influenced the Goodmans' perspectives on education? Why might other people from the same time period have different perspectives? How do our perspectives today compare?
- Compare and contrast Lucy Goodman's life to your teacher's life.
- What do you think it would have been like to attend school in a one-room schoolhouse?
- What was happening in other parts of Washington, the US, and the world during Lucy Goodman's life (1869-1964)?

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Harbor History Museum Collection